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AUTHOR Mark, Jorie Lester; Murphy, Garrett
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ABSTRACT

A study examined the affiliations between adult basic education programs and business, industry, and unions in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Of the 47 state directors of adult education who returned the mail questionnaire, 31 reported formal affiliations and 5 reported informal affiliations with businesses and/or unions in their states. Together, the 31 states with local affiliations between adult education and business/unions work with more than 4,000 companies and/or unions. Some states reported as few as 3 affiliations and one reported 1,069 cooperative activities. The programs mentioned were mostly funded by Adult Education Act monies, with business and industry budgets contributing the second largest portion of funds. Business and industry were said to contribute the following in their partnerships with adult education: space, equipment, dollars, counseling, and staff. The state directors surveyed were enthusiastic about their business and union connections. The instructional partnerships mentioned were predominantly in the areas of adult basic education (ABE), high school equivalency and English as a second language (ESL). Problems cited dealt mainly with difficulties in getting companies to provide programming on company time and in company space and in customizing training. (This report includes the survey instrument and a table summarizing data concerning the affiliations reported by the responding states.) (MN)

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• American Association for Adult and Continuing Education •

THE BASIC SKILLS - BUSINESS/UNION CONNECTION

Prepared for the

Council of State Directors of Adult Education

by

Jorie Lester Mark
Chair, Business and Industry Unit
American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

and

Garrett Murphy
Director, Division of Adult and Continuing Education Programs
New York State Education Department

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THE BASIC SKILLS - BUSINESS/UNION CONNECTION

A work group of state directors of adult education has been cooperating with the U.S. Education Department to learn more about the connections between basic education programs and business, industry and unions. Increasingly, business interests have become aware of the vital role played by basic skills programs in preparation of the workforce. Consequently, there has been much activity, but this activity is yet uncoordinated and is unevenly distributed throughout the country.

With this in mind the chair of the work group, New York State adult education director Garrett Murphy, in April 1985, mailed a questionnaire to the fifty state adult education directors and to the director of the D.C. Department of Adult and Community Education. (See Figure 1 for the questionnaire text.) This mailing was followed up by personal phone calls to some of the directors.

Of the 51 questionnaires mailed to the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 47 were returned. Only Louisiana, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia did not respond. Of the 47 responses, 31 reported formal and five informal affiliation with business and/or unions in their states. Sixteen state directors said their affiliation was not sufficient to report.

The 31 states answering "yes" are the states whose answers comprise the findings in this study. Six reported by local district. Districts in these states reported as follows:

21 of 30
27 of 77
4 of 61
43 of 60
67 of 140
17 of 40

These states are reported as state-wide responders in the belief that responses received were representative of state participation with business and unions. Even some of the state directors who provided statewide responses indicated that their's were approximations of "what we know to be happening locally."

Further, two directors (Texas and Pennsylvania) indicated that these data do not include the many companies who refer their employees to regular public adult education classes. This is no doubt the case with many other states.

The 31 states with local adult education-business/union affiliations together work with upwards of 4000 companies and/or unions, most of them medium-size (26 mentions) or small (20 mentions). Fewer programs work with local units of companies and/or unions (17 mentions) and still fewer (12 mentions) with Fortune 500 companies. States work with as few as three and as many as 1069 companies, they reported.

Why do enrollees attend these programs? Mostly they attend to qualify for a promotion or a different job (23 mentions) or to keep a job (20 mentions) — and less so to get a job (15 mentions) or to qualify for a training program (16 mentions). Some other reasons are for personal self-improvement and satisfaction, general well-being and enrichment, for improved skills on the job or because their company recommends it for organizational development reasons.

Surprisingly, these programs are mostly funded by Adult Education Act monies (24 mention regular formula or 306 programs and twelve the special 310 funding). Next major funding sources are business/industry budgets (19 mentions), state and local coffers (18 mentions). Then the list continues: JTPA (14 mentions), refugee assistance and VEA (10 mentions each), vocational rehabilitation (9 mentions), union funding (7 mentions) and, Social Security Act (3 mentions). Two states reported tuition charges; others talked about personal contributions and fees. One mentioned community education as a source and another apprenticeship programs.

What resources do business and unions contribute? In order of numbers of mentions, they are: space (28), equipment (19), dollars (18), counseling (17), and staff (14). Other items, written in, are advertising, brochures, educational materials and textbooks, utilities, referrals, consultant time for curriculum development, and job placement.

All in all, the state directors of adult education are enthusiastic about the business/union connection. Only manpower, time and dollars are needed, many say, to continue and expand the effort and promote networking. "It takes time and trust to build working relationships," is one summary. Another is: "It takes lots of staff time to get a project developed in industry." Another director says, "dollars are needed to pay for coordination time." From another: "Cooperative programs take time. Good results happen after taking time to deal with turf and feelings and provincial focus." But a district director says that only "funding limits our ability to grant all requests... for classes, for example, in ABE skills, whereby... materials and staff are provided by us with facilities furnished by the cooperating agency."

Making sure the business community "knows we are out there" is deemed the number one problem by several directors, while others say its hard to "keep up enrollment," to reach potential students, and to get local adult education supervisors to solicit business and industry participation. "The key," a director suggested, "is the marketing person and the teacher(s) sent to the sites." Other directors find funds (especially for expansion and for proper equipment for advanced training, staff and space) hard to come by. Business' changing needs make for expensive demands and unavailable space. Scheduling can also be a problem, as is responding to requests for "on-clock" training because "teaching staff is employed full time in other occupations." Size of class is sometimes not cost effective and time allocation and availability are also problems in some areas. So are scheduling, programming and enrollments. For example, difficulty arises when companies and/or unions are unable to keep at least eight in class. In one state, some companies are sticky about time and space allowed in-company for recruiting. Another director says it's a problem "getting information into the plant."

Manufacturing/construction/mining companies and/or unions along with those in the category of public administration are typically the types of industries mentioned (25 or more each). Transport/communication/utilities and retail/wholesale trade come next (with 17 mentions each) and finance/insurance/real estate, and services, are less well represented in these affiliations (with 13 and 14 mentions respectively). Other affiliates named included nursing homes and convalescent centers, appreticeship unions, private non-profit, sheltered workshops, JTPA, the forest service, the military, the U.S. Air Force and the National Guard.

Programs are held in company as well as school sites (21 mentions). Fewer (13 mentions each) take place in school-or-community-sites and in company-sites. Instruction takes place both on-clock and off-clock. On-clock only is recorded in four mentions and only one state uses it exclusively. In seven states, instruction is exclusively off-clock.

The number of instructional hours vary widely from a low of two to a high of 400. The average number of hours is 68.5. Two local directors mentioned highs of 1444 and 1500 hours, but only lows and single figures are reported in the average.

Instructional programs are predominantly ABE (28 mentions) and GED (26 mentions) with employability/life skills and ESL following with 21 and 22 mentions respectively. Career counseling was mentioned 15 times but only nine states claimed to have some kind of occupational component to their programs. Other course titles included leadership training; apprenticeship; occupational, vocational, technical and junior college education; special work skill upgrading as for example, clerical; vocational and technical updating and retraining; job enrichment and job club; and sign language.

Instructional methods follow a classroom format in 26 cases and a learning center format in 15 while 22 are individualized, indicating states are using whatever it takes in a given situation to get the job done. The methodology is in part competency-based in 13 states and programmed in ten. Thirteen states utilize computers for instruction and ten for assessment. There is video-assisted instruction in eleven states and audio in nine. Other techniques used are speaker/experienced presenters, a seminar format, counseling groups for developing attitudinal skills, practical application. One state indicated that instructional format depends on the particular employer/staff needs.

Program staff is mainly paid in 14 states while paid and volunteer staffs are used in 14 other states. Company-employed staff is used in 13 states; school-employed in 21; union-employed in eight, and post-secondary-employed in nine. Five states use consultants.

Twenty-six states provided estimates on numbers of learners enrolled, claiming 91,881 employees and 63,582 community enrollees -- just under 156,000 learners.

While one director says release time is essential, another says it's a problem to get companies to run the programs on company time or give employees time off to attend classes. Another state finds its biggest problem is getting employees to class for two hours at the beginning or end of a shift. Another director says student motivation is a problem. But, according to another, "unless participant is motivated by money, a job, interest wanes quickly and he/she will drop out for the some reasons he/she dropped out of high school."

Another director points to the need to customize training and other services as the most difficult problem, making "it difficult to rely on existing programs exclusively." Still another describes problems coming from "competition from community colleges, JTPA programs, etc., who have full time marketing specialists... (and from) consulting firms who view us as anathema because, as non-profit agencies, we can offer education services for less cost..." Another director complains about the lack of recognition by vocational education. But in another state "businesses are cooperative and willing to become involved but community people still need to be convinced of the value of these programs." But in other states, companies are enthusiastic about employee success; job propects are improved for individuals.

One director points out that business connections are far between in his rural state. Another laments the loss of dollars and/or program when business profits go down or the firm goes out of business. A number of district supervisors in one state complained that lack of funds prevent program operation year round; in fact, many are shorter than the school year.

One respondent, summarizes: "This area has enormous potential; it should be included in program evaluation efforts, and programs that pursue this areas should be rewarded." Concludes another: "We are only scratching the surface with business and industry dollar contributions to a collaborative effort."

FIGURE 1

April 9, 1985

Dear Colleague:

A work group of state directors of adult education has been cooperating with Jorie Mark of the United States Education Department to learn more about the connections between basic education programs and business, industry and unions. Increasingly, business interests have become aware of the vital role played by basic skills programs in preparation of the workforce. Consequently, there has been much activity, but this activity is as yet uncoordinated and is unevenly distributed throughout the country.

The work group intends first to explore the scope and characteristics of the basic skills-business, industry and union connection. It's further objectives are to identify exemplary programs in a variety of settings and configurations for use by the entire Council of State Directors and to develop widespread support of business interests for our basic skills programs.

The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to elicit needed information without being excessively time-consuming. Your prompt attention would be greatly appreciated. Please return the completed questionnaire by April 26, 1985 to: Garrett Murphy, Director, Division of Adult and Continuing Education Programs, State Education Department, Albany, New York 12234.

COUNCIL OF STATE DIRECTORS OF ADULT EDUCATION
PROVIDERS OF BASIC EDUCATION IN THE WORKPLACE

State reporting: _____

1) Name of person reporting: _____

2) General scope of your responsibilities (i.e. includes voc ed, etc.):

_____

_____

3) You report to (title, not name): _____

4) Does the adult education program with which you work have operational affiliation with business and/or unions? Yes_____ No_____
If the answer is "yes" please fill out rest of questionnaire.
If the answer is "no" please return questionnaire as you have filled it out.

5

Training Issues:

1) How many companies and/or unions do you work with? _____

2) Type of industry the companies/unions represent: (check all that apply)
transport, communication, utilities _____
finance, insurance, real estate _____
manufacturing, construction, mining _____
public administration (eg. hospitals, government) _____
services _____
retail and/or wholesale trade _____
other (please specify) _____

---

3) General size of companies your programs serve: Fortune 500 _____ medium _____ small business _____ a local unit of a company/union _____

4) How many learners are enrolled in these cooperative programs?
_____ employees _____ community people
_____,_____

5) Are the programs on-company-site _____ in-school-or-communitity -site _____ both _____ other (specify) _____
(check all that apply)

6) Approximately how many hours does the typical enrollee in the programs spend per year? _____

7) Is instruction on-clock _____ off-clock _____ both _____ (check all that apply)

8) What is the instructional level or thrust of the program? (check all that apply)

ABE _____ career counseling _____

GED _____ employability/life skills _____

ESL _____ Other (please specify) _____

9) Do the programs in which the above is offered also have an occupational component? Yes _____ No _____

10) Why do enrollees attend these programs? to keep a job _____ to get a job _____ to qualify for a promotion or a different job _____ to qualify for company and/or union sponsored training program(s) _____

11) What is the general instructional methodology of the programs? (check all that apply and describe further if you wish) classroom format _____ individualized _____ learning center format _____ competency-based _____ programmed instruction _____ uses computer for instruction _____ uses computer for assessment _____ uses video _____ uses audio ___ other _____

_____

_____

_____

12) Is staff for the program paid _____ volunteer _____ paid and volunteer _____ school-employed _____ company-employed _____ union-em,ployed _____ post secondary-employed _____ consultant _____ (check all that apply)

13) How are these programs funded? Adult Education Act 306 _____ 310 _____ Vocational Education Act _____ Job Training and Partnership Act _____ Social Security Act _____ Vocationa Rehabilitation _____ Refugee Assistance _____ state and local funds _____ business/,industry funds _____ union funds _____ other (please specify) _____,_____ (check all that apply)

14) Do businesses or unions contribute resources? staff _____ counseling _____ equipment _____ space _____ dollars _____ other (please specify) _____ _____

15) What problems, difficulties, or successes have you encountered in mounting and/or maintaining these cooperative programs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

CODE FOR TABLE 1

T - transport, communication, utilities
F - finance,insurance, real estate
M - manufacturing, construction, real estate
PA - public administration
S - services
R/W - retail and/or wholesale
O - other

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500 - Fortune 500
Med - medium
Sm - small
Lo - local unit of a company/union

Co - on-company-site
S/C - in-school-or-community
B - both
O - other

Emp - employees
Com - community people

Pd - paid
Vol - volunteer
B - both paid and volunteer
S - school-employed
Co - company-e mployed
Un - union-employed
Sec - post-secondaryemployed
SUL - consultant

ABE - ABE
GED - GED
ESL - ESL
SEL - career counseling
Emp - employability/life skills
O - other
OC - occupational component

AE - Adult Education Act 306 and 310
VEA - Vocational Education Act
JTPA- Job Training and Partership Act
SSA - Social Security Act
Reh - Vocational Rehabilitation
Ref - Refugee Assistance
S/L - state and local funds
B&I - business and industry funds
Un - union funds
O - other

TABLE 1

No. Cb	ST	TYPE							SIZE					SITE			NO. LEARNERS		STAFF							PROGRAM							FUNDING								
		T	F	M	PA	S	RW	O	500	Med	Sm	Lo	Cb	S/C	B	O	Emp	Com	Ref	Vol	B	S	C	Un	Sec	SUL	AHE	GED	ESL	SEL	Emp	O	CC	AE	VEA	JTPA	SESA	ReHa	Ref	S/L	B&I	Un	O
500+																																									
519	CA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x		35,264	1895								x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
1069	IA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		13,060	12,520			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
200-500	ME	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x				x		5,000		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
794	MN	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		24,472	37,845			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x
100 to 499																																									
163	GA	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		660	2,015	x			x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
148	KY	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	1,591	7,550			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
200	MI	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	3,000										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
210	NE			x	x					x					x		1,600				x	x	x				x	x	x		x			x					x	x		
128	TX	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			580				x	x			x		x	x	x	x				x						x		
Under 100																																									
10	AL			x	x	x					x		x				500		x			x					x	x			x			x						x	x		
29	AR			x	x	x				x	x	x					590	590	x			x					x	x														
13	CT		x	x	x				x	x	x				x				x			x					x	x	x	x				x						x		
60	FL	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		3,392				x	x	x				x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x				
11	ID	x			x			x		x					x		400				x						x	x	x	x		x				x		x		x	x		
6	HI			x		x	x			x	x				x		50		x								x							x								
34	IL	x	x	x	x		x			x	x				x		200	482			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x			x		x		x	x	x	x	

TABLE 1
con't

No. Co	ST	TYPE							SIZE				SITE				NO. LEARNERS		STAFF							PROGRAM								FUNDING							
		T	F	M	PA	S	RW	O	500	Med	Sm	Lg	Co	S/C	B	O	Enp	Com	Ref	Vol	B	S	C	Un	Sec	SUL	ABE	GED	ESL	SEL	Enp	O	CC	AE	VEA	VTEA	SEA	Reh	Ref	S/L	B&I	Un	O
Under 100 Con't																																									
15	MD	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x				Do Not Collect		x			x					x	x	x				x		x		x		x		
5	NH			x	x					x			x				75				x							x	x				x						x	x	
7-33	NY	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		40		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x	
13	NC			x	x		x		x	x	x	x			x		519	300			x												x								
12-15	OH			x	x				x		x				x		Unknown		x			x	x				x	x			x			x		x				x		
6	OR			x			x	x		x			x				65-150				x	x	x				x		x		x								x	x	
17	PA			x	x					x			x				142	142	x					x			x	x	x	x	x			x							
3	RI			x	x					x				x			80	80	x			x					x		x					x							
19	SC			x						x			x				359		x			x			x		x	x	x					x	x				x		
3	TN			x				x		x		x					100	100	x			x						x						x							
13	UT	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x		72	15			x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
8	VT			x		x				x	x	x			x		72		x								x	x		x	x			x							
2	VA			x											x		48	48			x	x	x				x			x	x			x					x		
None Specified	MD			x	x	x				x	x	x		x			None Specified				x						x	x	x					x					x		
	NJ			x	x		x				x	x			x		None Specified										x	x	x		x				x		x	x	x	x	

TABLE 1
con't

No. Co	ST	TYPE							SIZE				SITE			NO. LEARNERS		STAFF						PROGRAM							FUNDING								
		T	F	M	PA	S	RW	O	500	Mod	Sm	Lg	Co	S/C	B	O	Emp	Com	Rf	Vol	B	S	C	Un	Sec	SUI	ABE	GED	ESL	SEL	Emp	O	OC	AE	VEA	JTPA	SEA	Reh	Ref	S/L	Bsl	Un	O
Under 100 Con't																	Do Not Collect																									
15	MD	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x						x			x					x	x	x					x		x			x		x		
5	NH			x	x					x			x				75				x							x	x					x							x	x	
7-33	NY	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		40		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x				x	x	x	
13	NC			x	x		x		x	x	x	x			x		519	300			x													x									
12-15	OH			x	x				x		x				x		Unknown		x			x	x				x	x			x			x		x					x		
6	OR			x			x	x		x			x				65-150				x	x	x				x		x		x									x	x		
17	PA			x	x					x			x				142	142	x					x			x	x	x	x	x			x									
3	RI			x	x					x				x			80	80	x			x					x		x					x									
19	SC			x						x			x				359		x			x			x		x	x	x					x	x					x			
3	TN			x				x		x		x					100	100	x			x						x						x									
13	UT	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x		72	15			x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
8	VT			x		x				x	x	x			x		72		x								x	x		x	x			x									
2	VA			x											x		48	48			x	x	x				x			x	x			x					x		x		
None Specified	MO			x	x	x				x	x	x		x			None Specified				x						x	x	x					x					x				
	NJ			x	x		x				x	x			x		None Specified										x	x	x		x					x			x	x	x	x	

10

TABLE 1

No. Co	ST	TYPE							SIZE					SITE			NO. LEARNERS		STAFF							PROGRAM							FUNDING								
		T	F	M	PA	S	AW	O	500	Med	Sm	Lo	Co	S/C	B	O	Emp	Com	RI	Vol	B	S	C	Un	Sec	SUL	AFF	GED	ESL	SBL	Emp	O	CC	AE	VEA	JTPA	SSA	Reh	Red	S/L	Bkl	Un	Fo
500+																																									
519	CA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x		35,264	1895																								
1069	IA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		13,060	12,520			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
200-500	ME	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x				x		5,000		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
794	MN	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		24,472	37,845			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
100 to 499																																										
163	CA	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		660	2,015	x			x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x			x
148	KY	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	1,591	7,550			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
200	MI	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	3,000										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
210	NE			x	x					x					x		1,600				x	x	x				x	x	x			x	x	x				x	x	x		
128	TX	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			580				x	x			x		x	x	x		x			x					x	x		
Under 100																																										
10	AL			x	x	x					x		x				500				x						x	x			x									x		
29	AR			x	x	x				x	x		x				590	590	x		x						x	x			x			x						x	x	
13	CT		x	x	x				x	x	x				x				x		x						x	x													
60	FL	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		3,392		x		x						x	x	x	x				x					x			
11	ID	x			x			x		x					x		400			x	x	x					x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x						
6	HI			x		x	x			x	x				x		50		x								x	x	x	x		x				x		x				
34	IL	x	x	x	x		x			x	x				x		200	482			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x			x			x		x	x	x	x